



Planning Education

Growth Management Services

Short course demystifies planning process for elected officials, planning commissioners, citizens

Description

Local officials face many tough decisions in this era of rapid growth. In the state's land use planning system, decisions are made by city and county elected officials (who often serve part time) in cooperation with volunteer planning commission members and citizens.



The Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, in cooperation with the Planning Association of Washington, offers a "Short Course on Local Planning" that covers land use planning requirements and updates on new state laws and regulations.

Background

The short course is a three-hour course that provides tips on:

- The legal basis of land use planning in Washington state.
- How to prepare and update comprehensive plans.
- How to incorporate the goals and requirements of the Growth Management Act in your plan.
- What tools and techniques can be used for carrying out plans.
- Strategies for maintaining good working relationships among planning commission members, elected officials, and staff members.

Speakers, with backgrounds in the law or planning, lead the discussions. A wide range of special topics, such as "How to Prepare and Analyze a Community Survey" and "Planning for Water and Sewer Districts" can be covered, depending on a community's need.

Each participant receives a course manual that covers state planning requirements, citizen participation, growth management, constitutional issues, development tools, environmental legislation, shoreline regulations, and county/tribal relations.



What's Being Done

More than 20,000 planning commission members, elected officials, planning staff, and citizens have attended the short course since it began in 1975.

Participant evaluations include favorable comment, such as this from the mayor of a small town:

"Speakers were knowledgeable and presented their material in a clear and concise package, especially to those of us that are fairly new in the field of municipal government. The discussions were relevant to our current situation and all the council members and staff who attended the information."

Or from a city planning director:

"The discussion leaders were very well versed on the subject matter and gave excellent presentations for the planning commission."

The short course is offered throughout the state, free of charge. To arrange a course or attend one in your area, call Ted Gage, CTED senior planner, Growth Management Services, at (360) 725-3049, or email tedg@cted.wa.gov.

Photos: CTED/Rita R. Robison; Chris Parsons

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